

QUOTATIONS ON CHANGE AND THE FUTURE

If a man takes no thought about what is distant, he will find sorrow near at hand.

Confucius

Every act of discovery advances the art of discovery.

Francis Bacon

The future influences the present just as much as the past.

Friedrich Nietzsche

If you want the present to be different from the past, study the past.

Baruch Spinoza

If we do not learn from history, we shall be compelled to relive it. True, but if we do not change the future, we shall be compelled to endure it, and that could be worse.

Alvin Toffler

This is the first age that's paid much attention to the future, which is a little ironic since we may not have one.

Arthur C. Clarke

Truth emerges more readily from error than from confusion.

Francis Bacon

Inventiveness, creativity, lies in the future, not in the past.

Loren Eiseley

The unlearned man knows not what it is to descend into himself, or call himself to account. Whereas with the learned man it fares otherwise, that he doth ever intermix the correction and amendment of his mind with the use and employment thereof.

Francis Bacon

The great synthesizer who alters the outlook of a generation, who suddenly produces a kaleidoscopic change in our vision of the world, is apt to be the most envied, feared, and hated man among his contemporaries. Almost by instinct they feel when the seed of a new order; they sense, even as they anathematize him, the passing away of the sane, substantial world they have long inhabited.

Such a man is a kind of lens or gathering point through which past thought gathers, is reorganized, and radiates outward again in new forms.

Loren Eiseley

Look. There is tomorrow. Take it with charity lest it destroy you.

Francis Bacon

The geographical novelties of the earth are now exhausted. Our voyages of discovery have become time voyages.

Wyndham Lewis

Life can only be understood backward but it must be lived forward.

Kierkegaard

But howsoever the works of wisdom are among human things the most excellent, yet they too have their periods and closes. For so it is that after kingdoms and commonwealths have flourished for a time, there arise perturbations and sedition and wars; amid the disturbances of which, first the laws are put to silence, and then men return to the depraved conditions of their nature, and desolation is seen in the fields and cities. And if such troubles last, it is not long before letters also and philosophy are so torn in pieces that no traces of them can be found but a few fragments, scattered here and there like planks from a shipwreck; and then a season of barbarism sets in, the waters of helicon being sunk under the ground, until, according to the appointed vicissitude of things, they break out and issue forth again, perhaps among other nations and not in the places where they were before.

Loren Eiseley

The analogy that relates the evolution of organisms to the evolution of scientific ideas can easily be pushed too far. But with respect to the issues of this closing section it is very nearly perfect. The process described in the earlier section, as the resolution of revolutions is the selection by conflict within the scientific community of the fittest way to practice future science.

The net result of a sequence of such revolutionary selections, separated by periods of normal research, is the wonderfully adapted set of instruments we call modern scientific knowledge. Successive stages in that developmental process are marked by an increase in articulation and specialization. And the entire process may have occurred, as we now suppose biological evolution did, without benefit of a set goal, a permanent fixed scientific truth, of which each stage in the development of scientific knowledge is a better exemplar.

Thomas Kuhn

My interest is in the future because I am going to spend the rest of my life there.

Charles F. Kettering

Our prime task in the future, unlike that in the past, will not be to deal with similar - or even increases in the similar - but to adjust to a world where conditions are more different than similar.

William A. Conboy

Without communication, the past would be unknowable, the present unintelligible, the future unimaginable.

Frank Snowden Hopkins

Long range planning does not deal with future decisions, but with the future of present decisions.

Peter Drucker

Time is three fold present: the present as we experience it, the past as a present memory, and the future as a present expectation.

St. Augustine

To arrive at the simplest truth, as Newton knew and practiced, requires years of contemplation. Not activity. Not reasoning. Not calculating, not busy behavior of any kind. Not reading. Not talking. Simply bearing in mind what it is one needs to know.

Spencer and Brown

No one can take from us the joy of the first becoming aware of something, the so-called discovery. But if we also demand the honor, it can be utterly spoiled for us, for we are usually not the first. What does discovery mean, and who can say that he has discovered this or that? After all it's pure idiocy to brag about priority, for it's simply unconscious conceit, not to admit frankly that one is a plagiarist.

Goethe

For many men the abolition of that teleological kind of evolution was the most significant and least palatable of Darwin's suggestions. The origin of species recognized no goal set either by god or nature. Instead, natural selection, operating in the given environment and with the actual organisms presently at hand, was responsible for the gradual but steady emergence of more elaborate, further articulated, and vastly more specialized organisms. Even such marvelously adapted organs as the eye and hand of man-organs whose design had previously provided powerful arguments for the existence of a supreme artificer and an advance plan-were products of a process that moved steadily from primitive beginnings but toward no goal. The belief that natural selection, resulting from mere competition between organisms for survival, could have produced man together with the higher animals and plants was the most difficult and disturbing aspect of Darwin's theory. What could evolution, development, and progress mean in the absence of a specified goal? To many people, such terms suddenly seemed self-contradictory.

Loren Eiseley

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